

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Sprovieri's Custom Counters

Chicago Manufacturing Center

Short-Term Improvement Projects Make Long-Term Impacts At Sprovieri's Custom Counters

Client Profile:

Sprovieri's Custom Counters fabricates Corian(R) counters for home centers, general contractors, builders, designers, and architects. Located in Addison, Illinois, the company employs less than 100 people.

Situation:

One of Sprovieri's Custom Counters' Corian distributors recognized the company's growth potential and recommended the company meet with the Chicago Manufacturing Center (CMC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to discuss options for strategic growth. The company contacted CMC, and discovered the opportunity for several projects and improvements that could contribute to its long-term success.

Solution:

First CMC conducted an enterprise-wide assessment, which was supported by a State of Illinois Modernization Assessment Grant. The assessment, which took eight weeks, identified areas that could be immediately improved as well as recommendations for improvements to be made within three, six, and 12 months. Recommendations touched every aspect of Sprovieri's business: management, operations, financials, and marketing.

CMC recommend that Sprovieri's immediately purchase manufacturing pricing software and have employees trained in its use; conduct a time study on major product configurations to identify costs; take steps to manage its inventory more effectively; and implement financial measurement systems for accounts receivable and cash. Sprovieri's implemented all of these changes and standardized its pricing. The changes have improved the sales process from the customer's viewpoint, and improved profits by taking advantage of deeper volume discounts for materials.

During the time study, Sprovieri's management discovered that not everyone was using the proven method of fabrication. By shaving time off selected processes, Sprovieri's was able to improve production by broadening the scope of work done on CNC technology as opposed to V-groove technology.

The six-month recommendation list included upgrades in the communications department. Sprovieri's added a DSL line, networked the office's computers, and purchased additional laptops and personal computers. By improving its communications equipment, the company is saving even more valuable time and

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increasing the productivity of its employees. The Sprovieri's website is currently undergoing redesign in preparation for an e-commerce component, and Sprovieri's is working on its first strategic plan, integrating business goals with operations.

Sprovieri's is now beginning to implement several of the long-range recommendations. The company is embarking on the first phases of a lean implementation. There are more visual aids in the shop, work stations are better organized, and things have been put in their proper places.

Results:

Increased sales by 20 percent in 2001, with a further increase of 28 percent in 2002.

Hired 10 new employees.

Invested \$75,000 in electronic template technology to improve the accuracy and efficiency of production.

Upgraded communications and technology equipment.

Improved productivity.

Increased customer satisfaction.

Testimonial:

"I attribute our sales growth to implementing the changes the Chicago Manufacturing Center recommended."

Charles Sprovieri, President